

**Linda Clair**  
**Seven-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre – September 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 4c – Tuesday afternoon discussion session**

Question: I just wanted to check in. This has been quite a different retreat. A lot of physical changes have been happening and I haven't been sleeping much so I've been too tired to be vigilant. So instead I've been softer, watching the breath, but also with my body more. I asked you in one retreat, how can I take advantage of my body calling my attention to me more? And I think you said I'm doing enough. But something is happening this time where it's not so much aches and pains calling me but changes, more ease, and differences. But I'm too tired to be my usual vigilant self.

Linda: So you're not sleeping because you're uncomfortable or because you're more in your body in a different way?

Question: All of the above, and just energy, intensity.

Linda: Well, probably what F. is doing with you is freeing up your body so that the energy can flow much more freely. So that's probably why you're not sleeping, because you're having this sudden, huge influx of energy and it's all freeing up. So that's a great thing.

As I've said, being here is enough when you're that tired. So don't feel it's a waste. Even if you fall asleep it's enough. It can be good in a way because it stops you being too pushy about anything and all you can do is just sit here. So in a way it can be a good thing when you're that tired. But you don't know. You might start to get used that that energy and be able to use it a bit more a bit later in the retreat. We're about halfway now.

Question: But I'm feeling remarkably energetic right now after four hours sleep, so something's happening.

Linda: Well, maybe the physical changes are meaning that you don't need as much sleep too. And you're tired but in a different way – more from the energy. Often on retreats there'd be quite a few people who aren't sleeping as they normally sleep and you can just sleep for four hours, five hours or maybe not even that.

Do you have a nap in the day? (Yes, I'm trying.) So even if you don't have a nap, just go and lie down – it's the same for everyone – lie down and don't do anything, don't read or do anything else, just lie there, without even the intention of going to sleep but just not relating to anything outside, inside – just lie there. You might have a nap or even a micro-nap and that can help you to get through, or you might just have a rest, so do that.

Question: Something new is happening with that. There's gentleness, gentle observation rather than wanting to change it. I tend to find ways to be more present in my body every day. Certainly

since doing more retreats, I come back to my breath and my belly more. But I'm excited by this new space with it.

Linda: Good, be excited. And keep practicing when you get home, keep doing things like that. Often it's good to work out your own little ways of being a bit more present, like if you're in the car, walking, anything you're doing, cooking. So great.

Question: There's something that I do which I find not very nice and wish I wouldn't do it. In some respects, with this practice I'm getting softer but sometimes if somebody's giving me information before they stopped saying it I say, "I know." It doesn't feel very nice, I feel guilty afterwards. Do you have a suggestion about that?

Linda: Just watch it. I used to do that too. Maybe I still do sometimes, I don't know, probably do. Really watch it. It can be a really good practice to see things like that. So give up the guilty thing, don't worry about that. Put your energy into just seeing that, really making an effort to break that habit, because it is a habit. And part of it is impatience too because you don't want to keep listening to the person saying something. So step back a bit. It can be really good when you step back and you really try and listen to someone, even if you feel it's ridiculous or you've heard it before, maybe quite a few times before. You do have to make an effort but just seeing it as you've seen it is enough. So just work on that.

But don't beat yourself up about that. We all do it. It's one of the reasons that we do this, that ego thing, that impatience, "I know better." But the guilt will just compound the whole thing so look at that too. And don't bother with that, really don't bother. And talking about it like this will give it less power over you.

Question: Yes, I feel it's the first step, because it comes out of my mouth before I've even paused.

Linda: Yes, you have to actually make yourself shut up and not say anything sometimes. And it can be very beautiful when you start to do that because you do really listen and have that connection with someone. And it's often not what they're saying; what they want is that connection with you. And what you want is that too but in that way you're just pushing them away. So just practice it. It won't happen all at once, you'll still do it, but sometimes just don't talk, don't say anything.

Question: Prior to this retreat I've been processing a lot of stuff regarding my relationships and the suffering I've been experiencing. A few days ago I had an intense experience where whatever the suffering I was experiencing, once I grounded myself it seemed baseless or invalid, and I dropped into the suffering that was underneath that. And then the same thing would happen again. I was trying to perceive the assumptions and what I was feeling and what the situation is. I kept dropping one suffering for another and it felt like I was going deeper into the guts of it. But then there was an overwhelming feeling that it was a bottomless thing, a trap door falling onto a trap door, falling onto a trapdoor. Then I felt baseless, like I was seeing things through perceptions that weren't really true, and I couldn't see anything else. I was looking for a foundation. It was really a full on, scary experience where it seemed the entirety of my being was just layers of bullshit. It was really confronting.

Linda: Not your being, but your person is.

Question: Well, I don't know anything else. I don't know my being.

Linda: You never do. You never find out, you just stop trying to find out, and then it doesn't matter. Once all that stuff does fall away you see there's no fixed being, there's no fixed M.. The suffering is that you keep trying to fix it and go, "Yes, I'm this. I'm that. I do this. I do that."

So when that's happening all you can do really is come back to your body. You really need to use your body as much as possible as that foundation – the physical body rather than your thoughts, anything you think about, or even feel. Use this tangible object as your stepping stone. It's just a stepping stone, it's not reality. But it's a really, really valuable thing to use and it will help you when those things are dropping away quickly and you're seeing things very quickly like that. So when you feel too disorientated come back to the basics, come back to your body, come back to your breath. It sounds too simple and it's very difficult to do when you get really caught up in your suffering, but it's all you can do – just break it.

Question: Since then, that's been the effort, when I haven't felt as disturbed by things or irritated by how incessant it is trying to latch onto one story or another, one conclusion or another. Sitting up here today, right in front of you, I kept getting pulled back into the pain in my body. The thoughts had this buoyant dreamlike quality that kept drawing me away, and then I snapped back into the body and into the pain.

Linda: Do you prefer that to the thinking?

Question: Yes, for sure.

Linda: Good. And it won't always be painful.

Question: There was a fear that came up, like swimming in the ocean and just dark as far down as you can see and all sorts of sharks coming to get me.

Linda: Well, there's no bottom but you stop looking for the bottom. In my experience there's no point where you go, "Okay, that's it." And that becomes the beauty of it. At first it's the suffering because you want there to be an end, you want an end to suffering, and that does happen. But there's no end to *this*. There can't be. Eternity has got no end and when you accept that, that takes you into a whole new dimension. And then it becomes joyful that there's no end rather than "Ah, all I want is for this to end."

Question: I think there was grasping for truth. So there's no truth?

Linda: No, there's no anything really. The mind will try and grasp at that and say, "That's crazy, how can that be? What's the point?" And you do go through periods where you go, "What's the point?" And there's no point. And that sounds crazy because you always want there to be a point, a deeper meaning. You stop looking for the meaning and you're free.

Question: Where I'm at it seems that I can't switch off the awareness of my suffering.

Linda: That's what will push you on though.

Question: That's what I mean. It keeps it going.

Linda: Yes, because you can't go back, you can't go forward, all you can do is keep doing this.

Question: So when it feels there's no foundation or truth, then all I have is the fact that I'm suffering. It feels pretty grim. (laughter) But here I am.

Linda: Yes. You're doing it all for love but you just don't know it. But the suffering, yes. What did the Buddha say, "I teach a path of conscious suffering"? Consciously suffering is much harder in a way than unconsciously suffering. At periods during my practice I thought, "Ah, I wish I'd never started. I can't stop now." But of course at the end it's worth every second of the suffering, and it makes you appreciate it even more.

Question: So every time I'm consciously suffering it counts?

Linda: It does, it's not pointless suffering.

Question: Regarding all those layers of suffering that I seemed to be falling through, the other confronting thing was that all my suffering seems to be completely fabricated. I tried to find something to justify feeling the way I felt, or trying to come to some understanding of why I've taken the position I've taken – or this person has – and seeing I've fabricated all of that suffering in myself.

Linda: Yes.

Question: And not really knowing where to go from there.

Linda: Well, you're already here. You don't need to go anywhere. I know that sounds a bit trite when you're suffering but it's true. Suffering is a reaction to pain. It's not like you're never going to feel pain again but you won't suffer and you won't try and defend yourself by maybe attacking someone else or blaming them or whatever. It's really amazing when you stop blaming people for your suffering. It took me a long, long time and maybe I still do it. It's a really, really deep-seated habit to blame someone or something else for your suffering.

Question: I feel like blaming myself has been the hardest thing to deal with. But I guess it's the same. If all my suffering is completely fabricated there's no one to blame.

Linda: No, it's hard when there's no one to blame, at first. And then it becomes great. And then you go, "Well, I'm totally responsible for how I feel. If I feel crap, it's my own fault – not my own fault even – there's no one to blame, not me."

Question: Even blaming myself is some way of trying to squirm out of feeling it.

Linda: Accepting it and feeling it, and that's what this is doing. When you're sitting here and you're feeling that pain or that suffering all you want to do is get away from it and that's what thinking is all about. It's very tempting.

Question: The subject is, what is energy? I just want to say a couple of things of what I feel and then I want you to say, "Yes, D. that is energy." (laughter) When I go to sit, for quite a while, when I first

sit down and shut me eyes I can feel – it’s so hard to say what a feeling is like – in my chest in and in my head, and it’s quite pleasant. Here I’ve tried to breathe into it. It doesn’t last for the whole sit. But there’s something, sometimes I feel a bit kinder to myself in this retreat, not being so upset with myself for thinking most of the time, because I do come back some of the time, so I don’t get into adding to my thoughts by giving myself a good talking to. And something even more inside: I was brought up with pictures of Jesus and his sacred heart on my wall so I’ve got a bit of an attitude about sacred hearts. So if you had a sacred heart, if that was something real, there would be a little spot inside it that’s like a little movie... I don’t know what I’m saying. Is that energy, or is that me just having a fantasy about a feeling I had? What does that mean, “the energy that we’re ingesting”? (laughter)

Linda: Well, all I can say about you – forget about the energy, don’t worry about that – is that something has happened to you, something has given way. Usually when you’re talking you are beating yourself up saying how crazy your mind is and blah, blah, blah. Something has happened. What you’re describing is your heart centre. There is some truth in some religions, and maybe it is the sacred heart. But there definitely this is incredible softness and quietness and stillness about you that’s maybe been developing since the last retreat and just deepening. And that’s all you need to know.

Energy – what is it? Why do you want to know? Why do you need to know?

Question: We’re supposed to be doing it but I don’t know what it is.

Linda: The universal intelligence that’s creates all of this. The timeless. It’s timeless. Pure energy is timeless.

Question: Last night I was trying to go to sleep and not sleeping, and there were these flashes of – not lightning – of searing all through the body. I thought it was just stuff releasing or the illusion of pain or whatever. (laughing)

Linda: Did it hurt?

Question: It was really intense pain but so sharp and quick, and then it would be gone, and then it would pop somewhere else. It just kept randomly pinging all over the body. Then at a certain point I listened to my mind which said, “Well, if this goes on you won’t sleep and then you won’t be able to sit in the morning,” and I love that first two-hour sit. So I took a Panadol and put an end to it. Would you say I sabotaged a process? (laughing)

Linda: Did it stop?

Question: I went to sleep after some time so it stopped, yes.

Linda: No, it might have stopped anyway, I’d say. The Panadol might have just helped you have a better sleep. How did you feel in the morning when you got up?

Question: Every morning I wake at five with the alarm, and I just sit. Each morning I say, “I won’t do it this morning,” and then I come and sit. I had a lot of energy this morning.

Linda: No, I would say you didn't sabotage anything. It's just what you felt to do. What I used to find – and I didn't take pain killers much then – but if I did it didn't really have much effect on that sort of energy anyway, that sort of pain. It didn't seem to do anything much so I didn't bother. But no, you didn't sabotage anything.

Question: And for the rest, I feel it's just very pedestrian, very mundane, just constantly going back to the body and that's it.

Linda: Much thinking?

Question: The thinking goes mental but there's a quickness in catching it that's not experienced before, that so quickly, "I got you!" and come back to the body.

Linda: Good.

Question: It's just the mind is mad, there's a song that's going endlessly for days that won't stop. I went to see the musical *Hair* a couple of weeks ago and it's, "LSD..." It just keeps going, it doesn't stop, I wake in the night and it's going, it's a constant. (laughter) At the same time there's movies going, pictures, and thinking but there's just this awareness to come back to the body.

Linda: So just keep doing that, keep doing that. If the thoughts are quite quick or you don't spend much time it's actually a really good sign because you're not getting sucked down the hole with it, you're seeing it and coming back, but it's very tiring as well.

Question: Yes, it is tiring but it feels really good. It doesn't feel like they grab me for long.

Linda: So really be persistent for the rest of the retreat, as persistent and consistent as possible. And if that sharp pain thing happens again, experiment, leave it this time and don't worry about being tired and see what happens.

Question: There's a lot of energetic stuff happening like rushes and all sorts of things.

Linda: So feel them and keep going. Don't get too involved in anything but don't push anything away. And don't try and repeat anything. Good.